



The HIGH ROAD

"Preserving public confidence in public servants."

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Hawaii State Ethics Commission

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

We often receive letters and telephone calls from readers of The High Road. Some people ask questions about what they have read in our newsletter: "Why is this against the law?" "Why isn't this against the law?" "What about my situation?"

Other people just want to give us their comments--good and bad--about what they have read: "I agree with what the Commission said in this case." "I completely disagree with what the Commission said in this case."

We appreciate hearing from our readers. Your questions and comments tell us that people are reading the newsletter and are thinking about the ethics and lobbying laws. We take your comments seriously, and we will respond to anyone who writes or calls about the newsletter. Thank you for your interest. And please, keep on reading The High Road!

LOBBYISTS MUST RENEW REGISTRATIONS IN 1997

All lobbyist registrations with the State Ethics Commission will expire on December 31, 1996. Lobbyists who plan to lobby in 1997 must renew their registrations with the State Ethics Commission.

An individual must register with the Commission as a lobbyist if the individual is paid or receives any compensation or consideration for lobbying services, AND also meets either of the following conditions:

- (1) The individual spends more than 5 hours in any month of any reporting period lobbying, OR

- (2) The individual spends more than \$750 in any reporting period lobbying.

If someone is a paid employee of an organization or business and lobbies as part of his or her employment, the individual must register as a lobbyist if either of the above two conditions is met. If someone lobbies but receives no compensation for the lobbying services rendered, the individual is not required to register.

Anyone who meets the registration conditions must complete and file a registration form with the State Ethics Commission. Individuals who lobby for more than one person or organization must complete a separate registration form for each person or organization represented.

Individuals registering for the first time with the State Ethics Commission must register within 5 days of becoming a lobbyist. All lobbyists who are already registered with the Commission must renew their registrations within 10 days of the opening of the 1997 legislative session.

Lobbyists must provide the following information when registering:

- (1) Name, address, and business telephone number of the lobbyist;
- (2) Name and address of the person or organization on whose behalf the lobbyist appears;
- (3) The subject areas on which the lobbyist expects to lobby; and
- (4) A written authorization to lobby from the person or organization by whom the lobbyist is employed. The authorization must be signed by the person represented or by an authorizing officer of an organization.

Lobbyists may register with the State Ethics Commission in person or by mail. Registered lobbyists will receive a card from the State Ethics Commission to certify their registration. All 1997 lobbyist registrations remain valid through December 31, 1998.

Lobbyists who wish to register for the first time or to renew their registrations must contact the State Ethics Commission at 587-0460 to obtain a registration form.

COMMISSION ISSUES SUMMARIES OF ETHICS OPINIONS

The State Ethics Code requires the State Ethics Commission to publish its decisions, advisory

opinions, and informal advisory opinions. The Commission must delete names and other identifying information from its published opinions to protect the identities of the persons involved.

This year, the Commission also began issuing one-page summaries of each of its opinions. The summaries highlight the main issues and the Commission's opinion in each case. The summaries will provide state officials and employees, as well as members of the public, with a condensed version of the Commission's opinions.

Copies of the Commission's published opinions and opinion summaries for 1997 are available at the Commission's office.

ETHICS QUIZ

QUESTION: Does the State Ethics Code apply to all government employees in Hawaii?

ANSWER: No. The State Ethics Code, HRS chapter 84, applies to all state government employees and officers, including legislators and state board and commission members, but excluding justices and judges.

The State Ethics Code does not apply to justices and judges. The Code of Judicial Conduct governs the professional ethics of justices and judges and is administered by the Commission on Judicial Conduct.

The State Ethics Code does not apply to city and county employees or to federal employees. Each county in Hawaii has its own code of ethics for county employees. The county ethics codes are administered by county ethics boards. The federal government also has its own code of ethics for federal employees. The federal ethics code is administered by the Office of Government Ethics in Washington, D.C., and by other federal agencies.

The High Road is a publication of the Hawaii State Ethics Commission.

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